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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE COUNTERINSURGENCY
OPERATIONS CAPABILITIES, THE GROUND DIMENSION...ARE
WE ON THE RIGHT GLIDE SLOPE?



By

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Biography

Lieutenant Colonel Paul J. Kasuda is a student at the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. He completed a 180-day deployment to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, in February 2010 where he served as Deputy Group Commander, 332d Expeditionary Security Forces Group. He led the largest United States Security Forces Group deployed in combat since the Vietnam conflict. Composed of more than 1500 personnel from the United States Air Force, United States Navy, United States Army, and Ugandan Special Security Consultants, the Group was responsible for the integrated defense of Joint Base Balad to include both inside and outside the wire security operations. He previously commanded USAF Security Forces squadrons at Sheppard AFB, Texas, Hickam AFB, Hawaii, and Kunsan AB, Republic of Korea.

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Introduction

Today's military forces face asymmetrical threats arrayed throughout a non-linear battle field environment. No longer are enemy and friendly forces positioned in a linear fashion with a clearly defined forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). In years past, friendly forces enjoyed some semblance of security in the rear area, as hostilities were typically associated with the "frontline." United States Air Forces (USAF) were typically positioned in areas well behind the FEBA, operating in a relatively permissive environment. Today's environment has USAF forces stationed and operating directly in the midst of the non-linear battle-space, especially in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF).

As the operational mission in Iraq shifted from a regime change to stability operations, U.S. forces shifted their strategy to a new type of mission, Counterinsurgency (COIN). Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, defines COIN as the "comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances."¹ Deployed in the heart of the non-linear battle-space environment, USAF members now find themselves in the midst of ongoing COIN operations. U.S. airpower assets provide unique capabilities to COIN operations in the form of both kinetic and non-kinetic support. However, there is a seam in USAF doctrine and training for support and synchronization of COIN operations on the ground. The typical 'air-centric' approach to presenting USAF air and space power to combatant commanders has lost sight of the fact that Airmen are engaged in COIN operations on the ground. The USAF needs to improve its existing policy and guidance, as well as enhance its training and education on USAF COIN capabilities to account for Airmen on the ground.

This paper will examine how the USAF is engaged in COIN operations on the ground. This paper intentionally avoids the prevalent “air-mindedness” approach; rather focusing on Airmen on the ground. This paper will show that the USAF is not currently on the best glide slope with regard to executing the ground aspect of COIN operations, lacking both doctrinal guidance and training for its Airmen. This paper will first provide a brief overview of COIN operations and show how Airmen are engaged in COIN operations on the ground. Discussions in this area will highlight how Airmen operate in the non-linear battle-space and are an invaluable asset to the battle-space owner (BSO). Discussion will then move to current COIN doctrine, showing a lack of USAF ground specific guidance. Next, this paper will discuss current training for Airmen operating in the deployed environment, showing a lack of preparedness for Airmen to be effective in COIN operations on the ground. The paper will conclude with recommendations including the need to update existing doctrinal guidance, a push to enhance training with regard to COIN operations, as well as a recommendation for developing a wing level organizational structure to support COIN operations on the ground. The backdrop of this paper will call upon the USAF experience at Joint Base Balad (JBB), Iraq and how the 332d Air Expeditionary Wing discovered a seam in the USAF ability to synchronize COIN operations on the ground.

Airmen and COIN On The Ground

The battlefields of today are much different from times past. U.S. military forces operate on a non-linear battlefield comprised of a host of asymmetrical threats. In previous eras, U.S. air bases were located in the rear area, well behind conventional forces arrayed in a classic force-on-force engagement with clearly identifiable lines of operations. As OIF has demonstrated, this is

no longer the case. Major General Mary Kay Hertog, a former Director of USAF Security Forces commented that “OIF has taught us there is no rear area.”²

Throughout OIF, USAF bases were located within the defined battle-space of an assigned Battle-Space Owner (BSO). The BSO is responsible for all aspects of the existing ground campaign plan being executed in that particular assigned area of operation. As USAF bases are located within the BSO’s battle-space, it is crucial that Airmen develop a working relationship with the BSO, and when necessary help facilitate support of the BSO’s campaign plan. Such was the case with COIN operations in OIF.

According to a lessons learned report released by the HQ USAF/A9 on Expeditionary Base Security, BSOs are responsible for developing and executing a campaign plan supporting national objectives within a specific geographic area. The BSO is responsible for the synchronization of all friendly forces in their AO, including kinetic and non-kinetic actions. The BSO is also responsible for coordinating and leveraging the capabilities of all coalition, host nation and other partner units, including non-military entities like the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). If properly synchronized, these mutually supporting operations create a symbiotic relationship, unity of effort and, ultimately, a more efficient use of resources.³ As such, USAF bases play a pivotal role in supporting COIN operations on the ground. The following portion of the paper discusses how USAF ground-based Airmen provide support to these COIN operations.

USAF Airmen deployed to OIF found themselves right in the middle of COIN operations, whether placed under the tactical control of U.S. Army units under a Joint Expeditionary Tasking (JET) or as a member of an expeditionary wing deployed in a battle-space where COIN operations were being conducted. A relatively small number of Airmen deployed

in support of JET taskings. Table 1 below provides examples of JET taskings performed by Airmen. What is sometimes overlooked is the fact that Airmen assigned to expeditionary wings were both directly and indirectly involved in ongoing COIN operations. JBB illustrates how “regular” Airmen were involved with COIN operations as well.

Table 1 USAF JET Missions

Detainee Interrogation	Heavy Construction Teams	Detainee Guard Operations
Convoy Driver	Counter-IED Teams	Army Base Security (Defense)
Movement Control Teams	EOD (Bomb Technician)	Military Working Dog Teams
Relocation Assistance Teams	Utility Support Detachment	Police Transition Teams
Stress Counseling Teams	Well-Drilling Teams	Personal Security Det
Afghanistan Training Teams	Facility Engineering Teams	Convoy Security
Provincial Reconstruction Teams (Iraq and Afghanistan)	Iraqi Forces Support & Training Team	Army Base Law & Order Detachment

Source: Compiled from various sources, Headquarters Air Force Directorates of Security Forces, Civil Engineering, Logistics Readiness, and Operations, 2007.⁴

The 332d Air Expeditionary Wing was assigned Base Operating and Support Integration (BOS-I) responsibilities at JBB. As such, complete integration with the BSO for base security purposes was a necessity. Along with this came the need to integrate with the BSO to support the on-going COIN campaign plan. JBB interacted with the local populace on numerous levels. The base provided a large source of employment through various contract mechanisms hiring local citizens from surrounding communities which provided valuable service and support on the installation. The 332 AEW was also involved with various construction projects which included a medical treatment facility and local police station located off the installation for use by the host nation personnel. Additionally, the 332 AEW routinely treated local populace trauma cases ranging from vehicle accidents, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) injuries, and gunshot injuries. The wing also partnered with local national nurses and doctors, allowing them to participate in medical procedures on base and gain health care services advice for use in the local

communities. JBB also sponsored “Kid’s Day” events, where children from the local areas were brought on base and entertained through various demonstrations and interactions with American servicemen and women. In addition, the 332 AEW was responsible for Outside the Wire (OTW) security, combating the indirect weapons fire threat, as well as controlling entry onto the installation; both of which involved daily contact with the local population.

Returning to the notion of COIN operations, using military, economic, and civic actions to defeat an insurgency, the various missions depicted above offer some show that Airmen are engaged in COIN operations both directly and indirectly. The importance of these actions was highlighted in the HQ USAF/A9 report on Expeditionary Base Security. One of the findings shows that Airmen are directly involved with the BSO campaign plan, which includes COIN operations. The report points out:

“It is important to recognize that the Air Force and other operating bases in the BSO’s Area of Operations (AO) can have profound positive or negative second and third order effects across the battle-space. This impact can include decisions made inside-the-wire (ITW), whether it is Air Provost services, contracting, construction or something as simple as hosting an Iraqi children’s day. If these operations and activities are poorly coordinated and relationships aren’t clearly understood, they can undermine the BSO’s relationships with local national key leaders and adversely affect his efforts along a number of lines of operation.”⁵

Current COIN Doctrine

Doctrine is defined in JP 1-02, as the “fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives.”⁶ Furthermore, as Kenneth Bebbe points out in an article published in the *Air & Space Power Journal*, “The purpose of doctrine is to help us prepare to fight present and future conflicts by codifying the experiences of the past. Subsequently, doctrine shapes the manner in which the Air Force organizes, trains, equips, and sustains its forces.”⁷ Simply put, doctrine provides the foundation upon which operational planning, preparation, and mission execution is based. This portion of

the paper will discuss Joint, U.S. Army, and USAF COIN doctrine and illustrates how the 'air-centric' USAF doctrine fails to adequately address the role Airmen perform on the ground during COIN operations.

JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, dated 5 October 2009 provides guidance on COIN operations in a 249-page document. It describes in detail concepts pertaining to both insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. JP 3-24 provides guidance on Supporting COIN Operations which include: information operations; public affairs and media support; detainee operations; security sector reform operations; and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration operations in COIN.⁸ JP 3-24 provides guidance on a four step process in developing COIN operational plans while also providing various planning considerations for conducting COIN operations. JP 3-24 provides the necessary foundation for Services to build their respective guidance on COIN operations.

Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, published in December 2006, is the U.S. Army's 282-page doctrinal guidance. This FM is also recognized as the U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5. Information contained in FM 3-24 includes a detailed explanation of COIN campaign planning considerations, concepts of force employment, developing host nation security forces, leadership and ethics for COIN, as well as a guide for action. This doctrine document also contains a five page Appendix on Airpower in COIN. This Appendix recognizes the force multipliers that air and space forces bring to the COIN fight, and provides information on both the kinetic and non-kinetic support missions the USAF can bring to bear. This all-inclusive doctrine document provides necessary information for ground forces to understand the nature of counterinsurgencies and develop effective COIN campaign plans.

Like the U.S. Army, the USAF recognized the need to adjust their doctrine documents with regard to COIN operations. Their solution was Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, published on 1 August 2007, which has since been renumbered to AFDD 3-24. This 94-page document was developed after the U.S. Army's publishing of FM 3-24. As James Corum points out in an article published in the *Baltic Security & Defence Review*,

“The pace in which the Army and Marines produced a new counterinsurgency doctrine prompted the US Air Force to produce a major [COIN] doctrine document only seven months after General Petraeus published the Army/Marine doctrine. [AFDD 3-24] is a 94-page document detailing the Air Force's vision of the employment of airpower in counterinsurgency.”⁹

AFDD 3-24 provides detailed guidance on various air and space considerations with regard to irregular warfare (IW). This doctrine document includes information on air and space power capabilities and planning considerations for IW operations. Although AFDD 3-24 does provide information on specific airpower considerations for IW, it falls short of providing necessary guidance to Airmen with regard to COIN operations on the ground. Detailed below is a discussion on these shortfalls.

AFDD 3-24, *Irregular Warfare*, has been renumbered in late 2010 from its previous 2-3 designation yet still remains titled different than Joint or ground component doctrine. The USAF has chosen to keep its previously published Irregular Warfare doctrine title, maintaining IW as the overarching context of which COIN is a part. Although thorough in its approach to explaining airpower considerations within the larger context of IW, the newly renumbered AFDD 3-24 contains a relatively small section of specific COIN guidance. Its focus remains in addressing COIN as a subset of Irregular Warfare. Relegated to three different sections throughout the document, specific COIN guidance is mentioned in the following topic areas: ‘COIN and Support to COIN’; ‘Support to COIN’; and ‘Agile Combat Support (ACS) in IW’.

The specific COIN guidance contained in these areas is air asset or “iron” centered; highlighting how airpower within the air and space domain supports COIN operations, but falls short of providing guidance for Airmen living and operating in the ground domain.

AFDD 3-24 provides information on how the Civil Engineer and Medical communities provide support to IW operations; however, it fails to elaborate on other support capabilities equally engaged in COIN efforts. As presented previously, Airmen assigned to JBB were engaged with local nationals on a daily basis and used by the BSO in support of the overall COIN campaign plan. In this light, a review of AFDD 3-24 indicates a lack of doctrinal guidance on ground-specific roles Airmen perform in COIN operations as well as a failure to recognize the need to synchronize air base COIN and civil engagement efforts with the BSO.

In addition to the lack of stand-alone COIN guidance, AFDD 3-24 sparsely references existing Joint and ground component guidance. Throughout AFDD 3-24, there are only four direct references to U.S. Army FM 3-24: a quote on religious insurgent motives, a definition of an insurgent movement mass base, a quote of strategies used by insurgents, and a reference to FM 3-24 as suggested reading. In comparing the USAF and U.S. Army COIN doctrine, James Corum states: “In most respects the two doctrines stand in notable contrast with each other in style, methodology, and substance.”¹⁰ It seems as if the USAF, in sticking to its staunch “Air-mindedness” approach has overlooked the fact that its Airmen are on the ground and intricately involved in COIN operations. Corum further elaborates on his discussion of USAF COIN guidance by saying: “The core of the Air Force doctrine consists of data about Air Force high tech capabilities, a repetition of slogans found in Air Staff statements, and broad assertions about airpower with no examples to back up the assertions.”¹¹ Recognizing the importance of airpower’s role in COIN operations, Corum further elaborates his advocacy of FM 3-24 stating:

“Airpower is an important tool in counterinsurgency, and [FM 3-24] lays out some basic guidelines for the employment of airpower in counterinsurgency.”¹² Proponents of USAF doctrine argue that the U.S. Army has relegated the USAF role in COIN to mere support role, depicting its usefulness in a simple annex. USAF Major General Charles Dunlap, a former Deputy Judge Advocate, has spoken out against FM 3-24. He charges that “FM 3-24 does superbly articulate a thoughtful *landpower* perspective on the complicated challenge of counterinsurgency. It does not purport to be, however, a full-dimensional joint approach.”¹³ He argues that the U.S. Army does not adequately address the usefulness, nor the proper command and control of air power assets. He goes on to say: “At its core, FM 3-24 enthusiastically reflects the Army’s hallowed concept of ‘boots on the ground’” and that:

“Specifically, ‘targets’ of COIN efforts typically include non-kinetic contacts with the friendly population. [FM 3-24] seeks to win their [the people’s] ‘hearts and minds.’ To accomplish that, the doctrine contemplates huge numbers of COIN forces physically ‘closing’ with the target population through various engagement strategies.”¹⁴

In a separate article, Maj Gen Dunlap asserts:

“[Air-mindedness] reflects an Airman’s desire to avoid the carnage of ground-force engagements wherever possible. Moreover, whereas soldiers and marines may seek the “close fight,” airmen look for opportunities to obtain the desired effects from long distance—that is, without giving the enemy the opportunity to close.”¹⁵

In analyzing the USAF’s minimal direct references to FM 3-24, it can be argued that the USAF is missing the point that Airmen are in fact “boots on the ground” engaged in COIN operations. In today’s non-linear battlefield, Airmen live and operate on the ground in the midst of ongoing COIN operations. Although the USAF has developed doctrinal guidance to prepare its forces to execute both kinetic and non-kinetic air and space-centric support to COIN operations, it has failed to develop the same doctrinal guidance to support its ground-based Airmen.

USAF COIN Training

The USAF has come a long way in preparing its Airmen for deployment operations over the last decade. Recognizing the emergence of the non-linear battle-space and the fact that Airmen find themselves performing operations in hostile environments, the USAF has taken significant steps to train its Airmen on necessary combat skills. However, there remains a gap in USAF training with regard to COIN operations. Detailed below is a brief discussion on how USAF training fails to prepare Airmen on COIN operations.

Air Force Instruction 36-2201, *Air Force Training Program*, provides guidance and requirements for all USAF training. Chapter 8 of this instruction covers Expeditionary Skills Training (EST) requirements. EST is organized into four separate tiers. Tier 1, or Foundational Expeditionary Skills (ES) Training, is required for all Airmen and is:

“delivered through accessions and initial occupational training, and sustained through developmental education. [Its] focus is to help Airmen establish a “Strong Warrior Ethos” while also providing them a solid foundation for the [knowledge, skills, and abilities] to prepare to survive, operate, and succeed in a deployed environment”¹⁶

Tier 2, or Deployment-Ready ES Training, is also required for all Airmen. Tier 2 training is “designed to ensure every Airman maintains proficiency and sustain readiness currency for deployment.”¹⁷ Further divided into two sub-tiers, ES Proficiency Training and Home Station Pre-Deployment Training, Tier 2 training as a whole entails a variety of computer-based training, classroom, and hands-on instruction. Tier 3, or Advanced ES Training (Mission Specific), is designed for select Airmen and is focused on pre-deployment training that:

“supports both traditional [deployment] taskings and non-traditional USAF missions that support other [combatant commander] taskings. Completion of this advanced training provides mission specific, ES for the individual Airman and/or team, and often includes timely updates on the latest enemy Tactics Techniques and Procedures, use of ranges for field training scenarios, and small team leadership opportunities that are not available at home station.”¹⁸

Finally, Tier 4, or Advanced ES Training (USAF Expeditionary Center Assigned) is designed for only those Airmen tasked to deploy under unique situations. This training is designed to prepare Airmen on “skill sets needed to meet critical/emerging requirements.”¹⁹

The shortfall with the training requirements outlined in the USAF tiered training approach is that there is little to no specific COIN training for the bulk of Airmen deploying into present day combat environments. A review of the training curriculum shows some cultural awareness training, but there is little to no actual COIN training in any Tier 1, 2 or most Tier 3 training venues. The bulk of Airmen deployed under “normal” taskings receive virtually no specific COIN training. Using Joint Base Balad as an example, Airmen assigned to typical units on the base received no prior COIN training. Yet their day-to-day jobs have required them to deal with the local populace on a myriad of issues. In their report on Expeditionary Base security, HQ USAF/A9 points out the importance of ensuring Airmen are adequately trained in COIN operations. The report states:

“It is critical that Airmen understand COIN doctrine and philosophy and effectively train their forces to integrate and support the Battle-space Owner’s (BSO) COIN campaign plan objectives. Airmen directly influence the AO through well coordinated COIN efforts and individual actions while in contact with local nationals. Conversely, Airmen, through cultural ignorance and uncoordinated or un-approved COIN outreach efforts, can negatively influence the security situation for the AO and undercut the BSO’s effectiveness.”²⁰

To address this training shortfall, JBB developed COIN specific training which was delivered to all newly arrived Airmen during their “Right Start” orientation briefings. This training included information on COIN definitions, how the USAF fits into COIN operations, and individual’s COIN responsibilities; all of which could be covered in pre-deployment EST training.

The lack of specific COIN training, coupled with the lack of specific ground-focused doctrine and guidance discussed previously, combine to create a gap in USAF Airmen’s ability

to effectively conduct and support COIN operations. Below are recommendations on how to bridge this gap.

Recommendations

The USAF should do three things to bridge the gap between the doctrine, training, and reality outlined above. They are: adjusting existing doctrinal guidance, institutionalizing specific COIN training for all Airmen, and adopting a wing level COIN organizational structure. These recommendations are discussed in detail below.

The USAF must first adjust its current doctrinal guidance on COIN. Although the USAF has published stand-alone doctrinal guidance like AFDD 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, as discussed previously, the USAF does not have a stand-alone COIN doctrine document. Instead, it provides, from an air asset-centered approach, guidance on COIN operations in the broader context of Irregular Warfare. A new stand-alone doctrine document needs to significantly expand upon the Agile Combat Support guidance with specific attention being paid to the ground roles Airmen play in COIN. The new doctrine should be titled AFDD 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, to coincide with existing Joint doctrine. Stronger and more detailed references to FM 3-24 and JP 3-24 along with specifying how Airmen work with various ground component forces must be included in this new doctrinal guidance. Since there is currently no Joint planning effort to provide Irregular Warfare doctrinal guidance, the USAF should adjust its guidance to fall in line with the existing Joint guidance on COIN.

This recommendation should be presented to the next Air Force Doctrine Working Group (AFDWG) who should validate this doctrinal change. Subject matter experts such as previous 332d Air Expeditionary Wing leadership should be included in the Air Force Doctrine Writing Committee (AFDWC) for AFDD 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*. Their first-hand experiences can

provide insight on how this doctrinal gap adversely affects the deployed mission. It is important that this new doctrine be written with the larger Airmen audience in mind. Authors should avoid using the narrow aperture of focusing on the small number of JET tasked or Special Operations Airmen as typically the only Airmen involved in COIN operations. A stand-alone COIN doctrine, with an added focus on how Airmen perform COIN on the ground, will provide the foundation to develop requisite training and organizational restructuring.

In addition to updating its COIN doctrine, the USAF must also adjust existing training requirements. As mentioned previously, current USAF EST does not include necessary COIN training. All four EST tiers should be targeted to include necessary levels of COIN training. Tier 1 training should include basic concepts of COIN to include what it is, and what roles Airmen may play in supporting COIN operations. This should include more detailed training on cultural awareness and how simple ‘tactical’ actions may have adverse ‘strategic’ implications. Tier 2 COIN training should cover specific actions Airmen may be involved with in COIN operations such as medical interventions, civil engineer support, community policing efforts, as well as indirect roles such as sponsoring local community engagement events on the base like “Kid’s Days.” Tier 3 and 4 COIN training should target specific leadership roles in COIN operations and further explain how the USAF integrates with the ground component commander or BSO. Training at this level should also include how to interact with locally assigned Provincial Reconstruction Teams as well as other Department of State organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Consideration should also be given into improving cultural awareness training for NCOs and Officers, especially since establishing and maintaining relations with host nation personnel is critical to successful COIN operations and typically done at the line unit level. The USAF

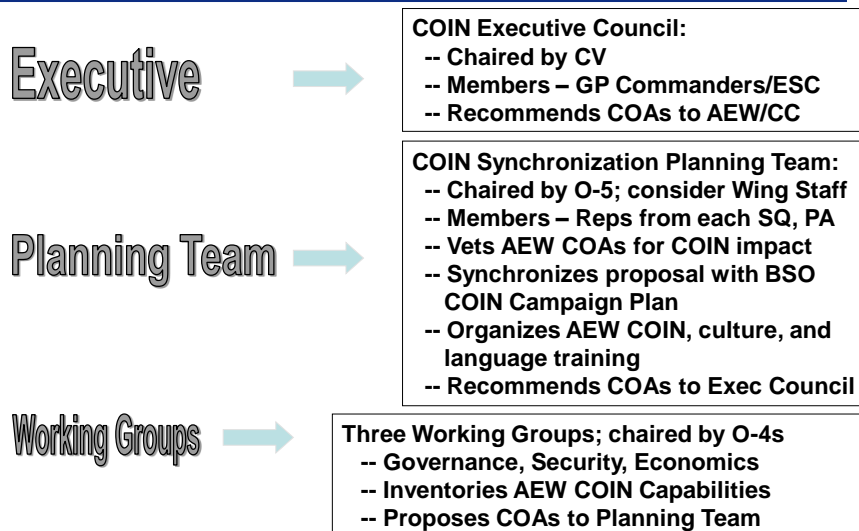
should also consider an appropriate level of mandatory language training for its Airmen. This alone would prove to be beneficial for any Airmen working with and alongside host nation personnel. The HQ USAF/A9 report on Expeditionary Base Security sums up the need for COIN training as it states: “COIN training must be universal. The Air Force must educate its personnel, especially key leaders, on current COIN doctrine and the underpinning philosophy behind COIN operations; failure to do so has negative consequences in the battle-space and creates friction with BSO by potentially undercutting his campaign plan aims and information operations message.”²¹ James Corum and Wray Johnson further highlight the need for a shift in training:

“[The] U.S. military education system, especially the staff colleges and senior service schools, need to spend a good deal more time addressing the issue of small wars. Currently, U.S. military schools are mired in curricula better suited for conventional war than for the types of unconventional wars likely to be fought in the next decades. There is very little history, theory, or doctrine on counterinsurgency taught in the U.S. military staff colleges today.”²²

Finally, the USAF should develop and implement an AEW-level COIN organizational structure. In late 2009, the 332d Air Expeditionary Wing at JBB developed a new COIN structure that integrated all base-level COIN support roles into the BSO’s on-going COIN campaign plan. Figure 1 identifies this three-tiered COIN synchronization construct. Under this construct, the Executive Council, chaired by the vice wing commander, was responsible for reviewing and recommending various courses of actions regarding base COIN efforts. Accordingly, the planning team was responsible for working directly with the BSO to integrate base COIN efforts with the existing COIN campaign plan. This construct also proposed that the various working groups, focused on governance, security, and economics, develop proposed projects and actions to directly support ongoing COIN operations.



JBB COIN Synchronization



Tuskegee Airmen...The Legend Continues

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Figure 1 JBB COIN Synchronization Structure²³

In addition to the synchronization construct depicted above, the 332 AEW went further and established a formal organization structure shown in Figure 2. This structure worked well to organize the various levels of leadership and personnel into a cohesive team focused on coordinating base-level COIN activities. Prior to formalizing this structure, different base units were working virtually independent of each other, engaging in various COIN activities with the BSO. For instance, the contracting office was working with local contract venues; completely unaware of the adverse impacts those contractual arrangements were having on the battle-space outside the fenceline. The medical community, engaged in treating local national trauma injuries and interacting with local hospitals, was not working in concert with ongoing efforts of the BSO to enhance medical sustainment capabilities within the local communities. The “Kid’s Day” events, where local children were invited to attend informational and recreational activities on

the base, were not being coordinated with the BSO, who could have been using these events to help foster the overall COIN campaign efforts.

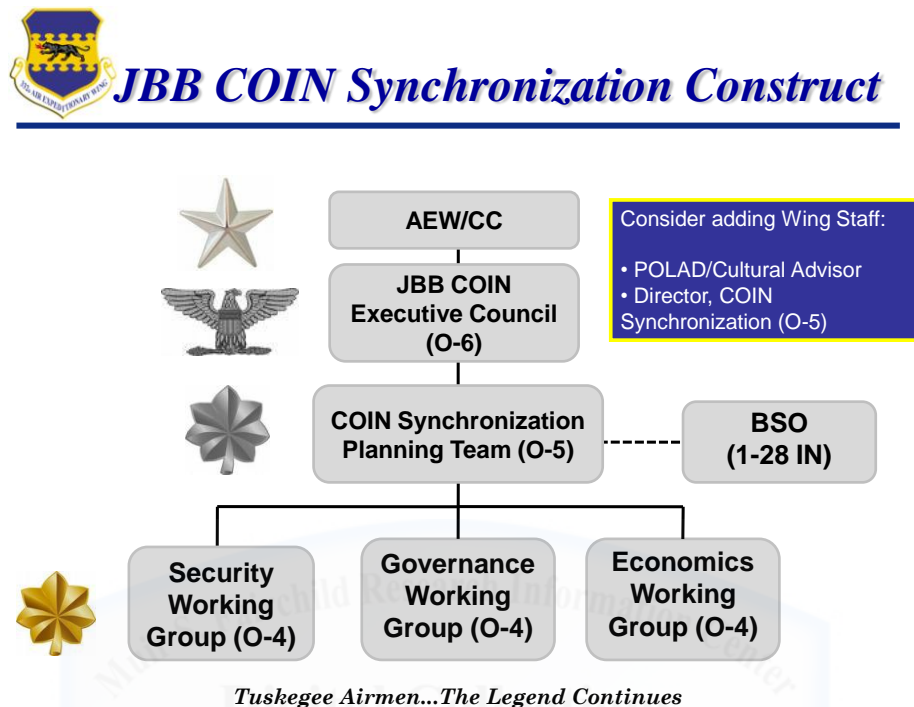


Figure 2 332 AEW Organization Structure²⁴

The 532 Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron commander, Lt Col Shannon Caudill, developed the formal wing COIN synchronization structure adopted by the 332 AEW Commander. This structure orchestrated the various COIN support activities on the base and helped foster a tremendous working relationship with the BSO. The end result was a thoroughly coordinated and synchronized effort enhancing the Joint execution of the BSO's COIN campaign. The USAF should either adopt this structure as is, or use it as a baseline for development of similar organization structures.

Conclusion

Today's battle-space environment has changed significantly from its traditional linear to a non-linear battlefield with a host of asymmetrical threats strewn throughout. In today's

dynamic environment, the emergence of new missions has become the norm. Operation IRAQI FREEDOM demonstrated these issues facing our military forces. The re-emergence of COIN operations in today's battlefields has taught our military forces several valuable lessons. There is little doubt that USAF airpower plays a pivotal role in supporting COIN operations. However, from the ground perspective, there appears to be a significant seam in the USAF preparation and ability to conduct ground-based COIN operations using USAF Airmen, despite the fact the USAF has been and currently is engaged in both direct and indirect support of ongoing COIN operations. The typical "Airmindness" approach to presenting USAF air and space power to combatant commanders has lost sight of the fact that Airmen are engaged in COIN operations on the ground. The USAF must overcome these obstacles. As Robert McLaughlin points out in his article 'Counterinsurgency and the Surge in Iraq: Balancing Doctrine and Strategy', "it is imperative that military leaders at all levels become experts at operating as counterinsurgents."²⁵

In an attempt to become such experts in COIN, this paper provides the USAF three recommendations. First, USAF doctrinal guidance on COIN operations needs to be adjusted. The USAF should develop a stand-alone COIN doctrine document which capitalizes on the kinetic and non-kinetic roles air and space power contribute to COIN operations, while simultaneously providing guidance to the Airmen on the ground engaged in the COIN effort. Second, adjustments in Expeditionary Skills Training need to be made, providing specific COIN training for all Airmen. Finally, the USAF needs to develop and adopt a formal wing level COIN synchronization construct in order to effectively execute COIN support missions on the ground.

The 332d Air Expeditionary Wing assigned stationed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq learned these lessons firsthand, while executing its role in OIF. Currently, the USAF is not on the

appropriate glide slope with regard to its ability to effectively execute COIN operations. With necessary changes in doctrine, training, and wing organizational structure, the USAF can re-vector to the appropriate glide slope, ensuring a direct hit on target; effective USAF Airmen COIN operations on the ground.



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Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

¹ JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (12 April 2001 Amended 31 July 2010), 108

² Gooding, "Doing It All: Security Forces--The USAF COIN Force", 25.

³ HQ USAF/A9, "AF Innovations for the Joint Fight Enduring Features of Expeditionary Base Security", 7.

⁴ Martalla, "The 'In Lieu Of' Myth --Airmen in Joint Ground Operations", 10.

⁵ Ibid, 8.

⁶ JP 1-02, 143.

⁷ Bebbe, The Air Force's Missing Doctrine: How the US Air Force Ignores Counterinsurgency, 28.

⁸ JP 3-24, Counterinsurgency Operations, iv.

⁹ Corum, "Air Power in Small Wars: Current Operations, 138.

¹⁰ Ibid, 138.

¹¹ Ibid, 140.

¹² Corum, "On Airpower, Land Power, and Counterinsurgency Getting Doctrine Right", 93.

¹³ Dunlap, "Developing Joint Counterinsurgency Doctrine An Airman's Perspective", 86.

¹⁴ Ibid, 87-88.

¹⁵ Dunlap, "Air-Minded Considerations for Joint Counterinsurgency Doctrine", 64.

¹⁶ AFI 31-2201, Air Force Training Program, 94.

¹⁷ Ibid, 94.

¹⁸ Ibid, 96.

¹⁹ Ibid, 96.

²⁰ USAF/A9, "AF Innovations for the Joint Fight Enduring Features of Expeditionary Base Security", 4-5.

²¹ HQ USAF/A9, "AF Innovations for the Joint Fight Enduring Features of Expeditionary Base Security", 6.

²² Corum and Johnson, *Air Power in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, 437-439.

²³ 332 AEW Wing Senior Leaders Update Board, COIN Meeting, Slide 14.

²⁴ Ibid, Slide 15.

²⁵ McLaughlin, "Counterinsurgency and the Surge in Iraq: Balancing Doctrine and Strategy", 3.